Shaping the Paradox of Somaliland Talks with Somalia

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Abstract:
Political rigidities created by Somaliland secessionism within Somalia are unsettled, three decades after the failed proclamation of independence in May 1991. Somaliland’s unilateral discourse in search for international recognition encountered significant challenges with no single country officially recognized. Somaliland’s talks with Somalia from 2012 to 2015 collapsed with key issues addressed have not been implemented despite attempts of diplomatic efforts by international facilitators. Given the current political landscape in Somaliland's existing political grievances (power arrangements) in the peripherals, recurrent electoral disputes, and the war with Las Anod further exacerbated the political crisis in Somaliland. Despite their protracted and unsuccessful venture, Somaliland should allow internal dialogue with different political actors/stakeholders to debate and discuss the common issues amid future talks through a more inclusive and participatory approach. Consequently, reviving the collapsed talks between Somalia and Somaliland in a situation where Somaliland is facing an internal crisis will weaken Somaliland’s political stand. Yet, both sides should deliberate on the interests of their people. This paper concludes by reshaping the dialogue process by reviewing the factors that led to the collapse of successful dialogue, as well as proposals for future fruitful talks and how to decide the future merger or the relationships between the two sides.

Keywords: Somaliland, Somalia, instability, negotiations, secession talks, power-sharing, talks.

Introduction
The voluntary unification between the former Somaliland British Protectorate and the former Italian Somaliland united on 1 July 1960, after gaining their independence from Britain and Italy on 26 June and 1 July 1960, respectively, formed the Somali Republic. The union existed 30 years, the government of Somalia was collapsed in 1991 when the armed oppositions overthrew the late regime and left the country in political turmoil. The people of North-western regions of Somaliland declared their unilateral independence on 18 May 1991, and hence, proclaimed that they restored their independence, and the Republic of Somaliland.

The forces overthrew Siad Barre were composed of several clan-predominated factions, from the Hawiye-based United Somali Congress (USC), the Isaaq-denominated Somali National Movement (SNM), the Ogadeni-based Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), and the Majert een-based Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF).

From then on, there were several peacebuilding processes, which some of them led the security council. There was a series of meetings held in Arta, Djibouti, on April 20 - May 5, 2000. The conference was aimed at bringing together representatives of the warring factions of Somalia to end the civil war that had claimed over 300,000 lives. Somaliland delegations
attended in Arta conference weren’t officially representing Somaliland, while Somaliland administration had been consistently disregarded all peacebuilding conference for Somalia.

Therefore, this paper is exploring the influence of the recently political and conflict dynamics in both sides are shaping the future talks between Somalia and Somaliland. Since the intention of this process was for the two sides to clarify their future relations (to stay united, to separate or otherwise). The paper firstly discusses some historical background of the two sides and political factors that will mainly shape the future talks. It also glances at similar talks and dialogue processes that previously held. In particular, this paper will shed the lights on prevailed and multifaceted political factors in Somaliland ranging from Las Anod war and power sharing arrangements to electoral disputes which discredited Somaliland democratic practices. In addition, it scrutinizes the factors caused to the failure of the dialogue process and finally tries to propose the possible future scenarios of the talks between the two sides. Among the specific objectives of the study: I. To explain political dynamics and conflicts in Somaliland would influence the future talks II. To thoroughly explore better ways to maintain fruitful talks between the sides III. To review the factors that led to the collapse of the process and consider the factors that would shape the future talks.

**Background**

Somaliland declared its separation from the rest of Somalia in May 1991, was a move driven by political considerations, mainly power struggle with the south. Despite maintaining its independence for nearly three decades, Somaliland's quest for international recognition has encountered significant obstacles, with no country officially acknowledging its status (Bereketeab, 2012). After Somaliland’s unilateral declaration of its independence is still experiences multifaceted obstacles ranging from regional, to local and international. The African Union and the Arab League, among others, have indicated that recognition is contingent on Somalia's endorsement, presenting a diplomatic challenge for Somaliland (Muhumed, 2019). While Somaliland has shown a willingness to engage in talks with Somalia, it has consistently underscored a non-negotiable position of its independence and sovereignty (Bryden, 2004; Poore, 2009). In contrast, Somalia has entered these talks with the primary objective of upholding the unity and territorial integrity of the Somali Republic (Huliaras, 2002). These entrenched divergences in positions have resulted in a deadlock, impeding meaningful progress in the negotiations.

International efforts to facilitate dialogue between Somaliland and Somalia began in 2012, with a proposal during the London Political Conference on Somalia (Muhumed, 2019). Despite six rounds of talks in various locations, the negotiations collapsed in 2015, and subsequent attempts have yielded no tangible results over eight years (Muhumed, 2019). In 2020, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed brokered an unofficial meeting between the leaders of Somaliland and Somalia, proposing a visit to Somaliland by the Somali president (Shaban, 2020). However, Somaliland insisted on official recognition from the federal government of Somalia before entertaining such diplomatic engagements (Arieff, 2008).

The complex political landscape in Somaliland, characterised by historical grievances, internal conflicts, and opposition to engaging in any dialogue with Somalia from certain factions, poses a formidable challenge to restarting negotiations (M. H. A. Ingiriis, 2017). Electoral disputes, clan conflicts, dysfunctional institutions, and ossified power arrangements between Somaliland regions, to mention a few remain sources of political instability (M. H. Ingiriis, 2017; Pegg & Walls, 2018). While power-sharing and electoral disputes are solely political processes, Somaliland politicians have preferred violent means over politics (Bradbury, Abokor, & Yusuf, 2003). Efforts to address power-sharing arrangements between the center and the peripheries, like the regions of Awdal, adding further complications, potentially fueling opposition to talks from within.
Somaliland (Gordon, 2023). The experience of Somaliland demonstrates over the years for peace and state-building process is an example that could be replicated in similar context (Battera, 2004). The talks are a welcome development. Tensions have been building between Mogadishu and Hargeisa, and delaying a return to the table had the potential to make matters worse (Majid et al., 2021).

Despite international and regional initiatives seeking a resolution to the broader Somali issue, the road to renewed dialogue between Mogadishu and Hargeisa remains uncertain, influenced by both historical factors and current political dynamics within Somaliland (Richards, 2020). It is possible to argue that a locally financed and locally appropriate process would likely be more sustainable and legitimate than the externally driven processes that have failed to yield results in Somalia and Somaliland talks (Hersi, 2018).

**Problem Statement**

While several countries separated through negotiations after long wars (Sudan and South Sudan, Indonesia and East Timor) just to mention a few. In Somaliland case, there had not been a movement (s) deliberated the separation of Somaliland from the rest of Somalia. The armed movements that collapsed the Somali government in 1991 had no agenda of separation on the table but equally fought against the Siyad Bare regime. Several countries separated through negotiations (South Sudan and Sudan for instance). While the country has no a fully functional government, Somaliland declared it unilateral secession from Somalia in May 1991 but could not earn an official recognition from a single country since then. There have also been unionist movements in Somaliland who advocate for the union. While SNM was the only armed movement in Somaliland regions, had both the power and the political leverages to coerce delegates support of the independence. Somalia-Somaliland talks facilitated by the international community didn’t bring any political breakthrough but have been consistently failing and finally in Istanbul in 2015. Thus, Dec 28, 2023, the new round of talks started at a time Somaliland is facing challenges ranging from electoral disputes, conflict with SSC and finally lost the large portion of its territory (Las Anod). Similarly, the Djibouti packed talks between Somalia and Somaliland foundered. This paper, therefore, attempts to further examine issues that shape the future talks between Somalia and Somaliland.

**Objectives**

This paper intent to discuss the dialogue process between Somalia and Somaliland and possible ways to shape the future dialogue as the preceded attempts failed to produce a significant political breakthrough.

1. To outline factors that hinder Somaliland’s talks with Somalia;
2. To explore internal dynamics and political issues that weakened Somaliland’s position about the preceded talks and the future talks to come;
3. To propose possible ways that foster a successful dialogue between Somaliland and Somalia.

**Methods and Materials**

This study employs qualitative approach which uses document review, interviews and focus group discussions. The primary data is collected through personal interviews and focus group discussions conducted by the author between 2023-2024. The secondary data is produced from various sources such as academic journals/papers, news articles, TV news, and YouTube videos. As far as the literature review and history is concerned, books, journal articles, conference proceedings, published in personal blogs and the like were consulted.

This study has various limitations. Data obtained from the focus groups mostly avoided to respond questions related to the topic due and I could not reach out active politicians in both sides due lack of funding for the study. Most of the academicians were involved in the interview sessions provided with plentiful data, that was rich and informative.
This researcher’s political orientation and ideology might influence the selection of data sources for both primary and secondary data, but this does mean, the researcher is a unionist or a secessionist neither.

**Political Stability First**

As a fragile state, Somaliland is a low-income country characterised by weak national capacity and legislative defection. This makes citizens vulnerable to potential crisis (conflicts, violence, and civil war) and natural shocks. At its core fragility is a deeply political phenomenon (Green, 2017). The Somaliland situation is characterised by a fundamental lack of effective political processes that can bring state capacities and social expectations into equilibrium (Richards, 2020). Political instability in Somaliland has challenged every leadership strategy of successive governments and well-meaning Somaliland people. Subsequent Somaliland governments failed to address key major sources of instability.

To define political instability in Somaliland, this article depended on prevailing political grievances on power sharing/arrangements, electoral disputes, violent protests, some ministerial changes, and constitutional issues. The influence and power of the traditional authorities over the formal national structures result in dramatic instability in government institutions. In contrast, the traditional structures still overshadow the formal institutions, many good examples were witnessed in our context (Gatimu, 2014).

Political instability has become a serious problem for Somaliland, yet the government has not seriously addressed the root causes (Ali, 2015). Some of the contentious issues around which regions and communities in Somaliland agitate for internal dialogue in subsequent administration relate to access to political power, demands for inclusive and participatory politics, demands for power (re)configurations based on regional or clan balance, demands for equitable and impartial distribution of national resources.

However, reviving the discontinued talks between the two parties will be impeded by the overwhelming internal political disputes within Somaliland, and the violent conflict with SSC (Khatumo) might prevent future talks with Somalia. It seems too late for the Somaliland administration to trade off its political upheavals, but the talk is unprecedented. If the current Somaliland wants to survive the political storms, it should focus more on its affairs than talks with Somalia. As such, again, it’s too late but crucial to take bold steps towards political and economic systems restructuring and reforms, including demand for decentralization of political power and autonomy, while the power arrangement within complementary institutions needs to be addressed through revising the national constitution and its derivatives.

Furthermore, it is very important to underscore elections and electoral processes equally generate storms around which relevant national institutions often fail to address before the subject of conflicts becomes multifaceted. As such, the recent dispute over electoral schedules deeply divided Somaliland political organizations and its people while relevant institutions that supposed to find legal solutions to the current crisis seemed to have been influenced by the interest of the current president. Such controversies may not be resolved through political power battles between the incumbent president’s administration, leaders of political parties, and opposition leaders. Disagreement on the electoral code, voters’ register and timetable for elections, and questions around the independence and/or composition of the electoral management bodies were continued to exist. Electoral disputes between the political parties have been intermediated by the elders from one side while concerned institutions seemed to have been evaporated. There are also demands for national political dialogues over constitutional and institutional issues.

Nevertheless, the potential obstacles facing the National Dialogue within Somaliland are significant. There is the challenge of bringing together communities currently in conflict. Forcing interaction between groups in active conflict has sometimes led to more aggravation.
and has not achieved significant progress. Additionally, there is a challenge in the capacity of inclusivity.

Clan-nationalist political narratives have increased clan polarisation, inter-communal intolerance, and violence and are antagonistic to the Somaliland President’s hope for national unity. Such narratives that some politicians exploited pit one group against another.

Now that a date for a vote has been set, the 2024 elections will be another major test for Somaliland’s future. The government still holds many cards – including formidable means of coercion – and has little sympathy for the increasingly unified demand of Somaliland and political opposition for an inclusive process and true power sharing. This testifies to the inability of the current administration to manage the political turmoil and perplexing views and opinions of its citizens. Despite evidence about the value of inclusion and normative frameworks to promote civilian voices, peace processes still tilt toward exclusion and downplaying the voices from part of Somaliland people, particularly the SSC and Awdal region.

While the National Dialogue seems to focus on a “national” level, many grievances over injustice, war traumas, identity crises, resources, and power are localised. They must be answered at the local level. Aside from the formation of new political associations and Somaliland’s frequently disputed electoral issues, the breakaway of SSC regions, the political storms that emerged in the Awdal communities, the political exclusion of Somaliland leadership, ossified political grievances accelerated the need for a post-transition national political dialogue to address critical unresolved issues. Therefore, it was not surprising that in the lead-up to the presidential elections of 2024, contentious issues will be raised.

Internal Sociopolitical and Legal Challenges Hindering the Negotiation Process

Several factors have impeded the progress of dialogue between Somaliland and Somalia, hindering the effectiveness of the political negotiation process. These elements include:

Unscrupulous Negotiations

Talks were frequently marred by a lack of sincerity, with negotiating parties often engaging in discussions to either reverse their positions or prolong the process indefinitely, believing that victory could be achieved through the perpetuation of uncertain circumstances. For instance,

Converse Articles in Constitutions

Both sides refer to articles that legitimize their fundamental difference in sovereignty.

Exclusion of Key Stakeholders

Past negotiations between Somaliland and Somalia predominantly involved government officials and political parties, neglecting the silent majority. Civil society organisations, think tanks, youth, academia, and victims of conflict, such as refugees and internally displaced individuals, were rarely included, diminishing the inclusivity of the dialogue process.

Lack of Guarantees and Exit Strategies

Dialogue processes lacked viable guarantees for political, legal, and economic livelihoods for those perceived as 'losers.' Additionally, no acceptable exit strategies were developed for outgoing rulers, contributing to the instability of the political landscape post-negotiation.

Resource Competition

Somaliland's political agenda regarding Somalia was often undermined by intense competition for limited resources. The value of Somaliland's government position, negotiated during political dialogue, rapidly depreciated when internal political conflicts arose.
Short-Term Interests
Somaliland’s political elites frequently prioritised personal and short-term interests in their negotiation tactics and attitudes, diverting attention from long-term stability and cooperation.

Historical Exclusion
Over the years, Somaliland elites consistently avoided efforts to include all stakeholders and convene a comprehensive national dialogue process, perpetuating a historical trend of exclusion.

Lack of Future Vision
Somaliland failed to present an intelligent strategy outlining the anticipated future relationship between Somalia and Somaliland, hindering the development of a forward-looking and sustainable dialogue process.

Exclusive Political Stance
The political leaders and committees designated for the dialogue process in Somaliland often maintained an exclusive political stance guided by emotional associations with major civil wars that led to the collapse of the Somali Republic. This emotional approach hindered the adoption of pragmatic and constructive negotiation strategies.

Shaping Somaliland’s Political Dialogue with Somalia
Understanding the essence of National Dialogues necessitates an exploration of their origin within a specific context. Therefore, this section presents reviews extracted from existed literature and quoted interviews with nine respondents.

Notably, Somaliland achieved peace and state-building through an inclusive political dialogue involving its clans. Traditional mechanisms have played a pivotal role, with elders mediating and fostering a conducive atmosphere for dialogue, thus averting conflicts and violence (Richards, 2020). As part of a wide range of peacebuilding approaches, “dialogues” are not only to resolve conflicts but more importantly to heal wounds, reconcile groups, build confidence and trust in institutions and in people towards social cohesion and national development (Akinrinde).

To maintain stability, relationships between individuals and communities must be cultivated to enable constructive dialogues addressing differences and preventing their escalation into protracted civil wars. Given the current political landscape in Somaliland, it is crucial to assess its impact on future dialogues with Somalia. Public awareness of the deteriorating situation calls for urgent solutions, yet viable options are met with scepticism. Prolonged political issues in Somaliland inevitably results conflicts over power and resource competition has been a threat to the stability (Bade, 2024).

Somaliland grapples with security issues and intense political polarisation, particularly in Sool and Awdal regions respectively. The recent conflict in Las Anod has drawn international attention, highlighting the challenges ahead, including scheduled elections in November 2024. Amid contested political transitions and polarisation, scholars and elites in Somaliland must engage in a national dialogue to address the country’s dilemmas (Chonka, 2017).

“The war with Las-Anod severely damaged and paralysed Somaliland; it is a problem with a gigantic proportion that resulted in the regional boundaries shrinking, changes in the demography of Somaliland along with long-lasting tribal war. This war will cause all resources to drain into the current war, and nothing much will be spared for basic service delivery and development.”

Somaliland should focus on its internal affairs ranging from power arrangement to frequently opening electoral disputes. In contrast, the war in Las Anod will bluster Somaliland government as a state or as a clan-led administration that is currently at war with its counterparts.

The internal dialogue process should be inclusive, accommodating diverse opinions and fostering an environment for discussions on power arrangements, fair resource distribution, and electoral disputes.
“I believe Somaliland administration should exalt internal dialogue with other political stakeholders within through establishing an enabling environment and tackle oppressive partisan comportments.”

“Somaliland’s committee for recognition and Somalia talks is exclusive and extractive by design, their agenda and political ideology is grounded on SNM’s fabricated narratives and short-term interests of clan affiliates. Therefore, Somaliland should deliberate on creating a nationally owned and unified political agenda brought about through inclusive and participatory consultations aimed at achieving a political and legal breakthrough in its discourse.”

“Similarly, if Somaliland wants to survive a bit longer than expected from its internal political crisis, which resulted in the SSC separation from the rest, the current administration should address potential and ossified grievances on power arrangements and fair resource distributions across all regions of Somaliland. It is also worrisome that relevant bodies have not yet legally resolved electoral disputes. In contrast, any delays and divergence from the agreed framework might result in prolonged state conflict”.

As national dialogue processes potentially transform conflicts inclusively, Somaliland’s internal dialogue should involve scholars, elites, diaspora communities, academia, and youth groups. Discussions on the political status of Somaliland should commence before the next elections to avoid dangerous tensions and external interventions. Technical talks on common challenges may pave the way for more complex negotiations, whereby unionists and secessionists could ably debate options that would spare another captive of 30 years.

“Somaliland’s internal dialogue should accommodate diverse opinions, interests, and ideas and be tolerant to challenges posed by the participation of the scholars and the elites, including the diaspora community, the academia, youth groups and SCOs. Most importantly, the Somaliland administration should provide a legitimate platform for secessionists and unionists to dialogue and seriously debate and discuss the foreseeable future of Somaliland’s status and the possible options or scenarios.”

The time for serious discussions about Somaliland’s political status will likely come after Somaliland’s next elections since the current administration cannot satisfy different political interests of the major political stakeholders, be the peripherals, and the political organisations. But waiting until then to have any talks at all would be dangerous; tensions between the two sides persist, external powers compete for advantage at a cost to local stability, and Somaliland side and Puntland remain at loggerheads as forces gather in border areas. Against this backdrop, side-tracking without consultation and dialogue with the key stakeholders exacerbates the existing conflicts. Engaging in technical talks about common security and economic challenges might help defuse those tensions. It could build mutual confidence and create goodwill for the more difficult negotiations down the road.

“Somaliland’s narrative towards talks with Somalia should shift from emotional politics to a pragmatic approach based on legal foundations. Political dialogue processes must be nationally owned, avoiding external imposition to maintain legitimacy and alignment with ground realities.”

The urgency to negotiate with Somalia arises from the changing dynamics, including the provisional recognition of Las Anod as a federal member state and the potential isolation resulting from East Africa Community integration. External engagement should be calibrated to ensure effective conflict-sensitive mediation, excluding countries with explicit regional interests.

Considering the geopolitical complexities, Somaliland’s internal affairs will significantly shape its talks with Somalia and international engagements. Facilitators should clarify their roles and mandates, emphasising transparency to prevent misunderstandings and build legitimacy for the national dialogue.

“The proxy wars significantly influence the political landscape in the Horn of Africa, whereby China, western allies and other opportunistic
states like the UAE are in the context and appear in the frontline. Since the talks between the two parties will not happen without the international community’s support, frontline countries and those with explicit political/economic/social interest should be excluded from the mediation process.”

In conclusion, the success of the dialogue between Somaliland and Somalia lies in their ability to address internal conflicts, foster inclusivity, and navigate external dynamics, ultimately contributing to lasting peace and stability.

The Way Forward

National Dialogues are intricately linked to historical patterns of political transition, power-sharing disputes, resource distribution, and development inequalities. In contexts marked by conflict, these dialogues serve as crucial mechanisms to bridge internal divisions, reconstruct relationships between the government and various factions in a conflict-ridden society, and establish a new social contract among conflicting interest groups. In the last decade, Somaliland didn’t further improve the tradition of National Dialogues. As result, the current Somaliland administration should recognise the significance of the dialogue as platforms for peaceful transformation and developing coherent solutions to diverse political conflicts.

For the political dialogue process between Somaliland and Somalia to succeed, it must embrace inclusivity through both bottom-up and top-down approaches, culturally rooted, involving various stakeholders such as political elites, civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, and local communities. Inclusivity, particularly in Somaliland, is vital for addressing differences effectively. Civil society is crucial in pressuring conflicting parties to engage in dialogue, with business and media voices contributing significantly.

The success of a National Dialogue hinges on the leaders and steering committee’s ability to incorporate diverse segments of the population, including those with differing opinions on secessionist and unionist perspectives, such as youth, traditional leaders, opposition representatives, women, and religious groups. Neutral facilitators are essential to guide discussions and manage potential disputes that could undermine the productivity of the dialogue. Commitment from the steering committee and the government is paramount to addressing the root causes of the crises, implementing recommendations sincerely, and developing meaningful policies and mechanisms accordingly.

While Somaliland and Somalia are the primary initiators, participants, and beneficiaries of the dialogue process, impartial intermediaries may play a crucial role in tense relations. These trusted actors can facilitate and initiate dialogue processes, providing financial or technical support and ensuring that the dialogue serves the interests of all parties involved. The involvement of impartial conveners is particularly common in politically tense environments where initiating and managing a dialogue process independently might be challenging for political actors. In every context, the primary responsibility of dialogue facilitators is to ensure the effective and fair conduct of the dialogue for all parties involved.

Conclusion and Recommendations

National dialogue on state affairs is imperative to prevent further fragmentation in Somaliland. Consequently, two intertwined dialogues are necessary. Firstly, an internal dialogue among pertinent political stakeholders, led by a mandated national committee, is urgently needed. Recognising the influence of internal issues on external trajectories, Somaliland must promptly address internal affairs and create a conducive climate for successful and productive dialogue. Secondly, reviving collapsed talks with Somalia is crucial, given the interest of the people of Somaliland in East African Community countries. The following key recommendations are proposed:
To the Internal Dialogue

1. National dialogue processes should employ inclusive negotiating mechanisms to shape decisions during political transitions.
2. These processes should address tensions related to inclusivity, powers, mandate, and their relationship with existing institutions.
3. Demonstrate extensive preparations and deliberations to make the dialogue a more political and contentious process.
4. Clarify the role of national dialogues in transitional processes and their relationship with existing institutions to reduce disputes.
5. Establish mechanisms ensuring the impartiality of committee operations, inputs, and products, with an observatory organization monitoring discourse closely.
6. Ensure the agenda of the dialogue is manageable, realistic, and well-communicated.
7. The General Assembly (GA) of the committee should validate the agenda with a two-thirds majority.

To National Governments and Leaders

1. Political leaders should demonstrate responsiveness to all citizens, fostering collaboration and consensus-building.
2. Acknowledge that public legitimacy extends beyond being 'president elected.'
3. Recognize that the state alone cannot create effective, legitimate institutions or guarantee societal violence absence.
4. Encourage civil society organizations to create platforms for reasoned public debate and constructive dialogue.
5. The selection of dialogue participants will be closely scrutinized and contentious.
6. Ensure the agenda of the dialogue is manageable, realistic, and well-communicated.
7. Encourage international assistance actors to engage with parliament, political parties, and the wider public about their assistance.
8. Create independent and impartial platforms for facilitation, mediation, consensus-building, participatory-action-research, transparent, and collaborative leadership.

To Citizens and Civil Society

1. Foster mindsets, attitudes, and skills for collaboration with citizens, local and national authorities, including those outside one's group.
2. Recognize rights, duties, and the responsibility and ability to contribute to legitimate institutions, good governance, and conflict prevention.
3. Be critical about the performance of public figures and institutions, proposing constructive and practical solutions.
4. Create platforms for reasoned and constructive public debate and dialogue, inviting government officials and the elite on equal footing.
5. Establish independent and impartial platforms for facilitation, mediation, consensus-building, participatory-action research, transparent, and collaborative leadership.

To External Assistance Actors

1. Engage with independent and impartial platforms supporting facilitation, mediation, and consensus-building through participatory-action-research and case studies.
2. Acknowledge Somalis' resilience and strong local and national capacities in peace and state-building.
3. Accept that a 'single political dialogue' is insufficient; multiple dialogues of different nature are often needed.
4. Move away from 'technical' approaches alone and focus on building legitimate institutions and fostering a culture of reasoned debate and constructive collaboration.
5. Encourage critical but constructive collaboration between the state and civil society, moving away from antagonism and competition.
6. Fully comprehend national and local dynamics from diverse perspectives.
7. Use leverage to protect and promote the political space for broad, inclusive, and participatory political dialogue.

References


